

State Representative
Joyce McDonald

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Appropriations
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Trade and Economic Development
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2003 Legislative Report • 25th District

Dear friends,

It took an extra 31 days to complete our work in the Legislature this year. However, we had some particularly difficult challenges to overcome, including a budget shortfall of more than \$2.7 billion.

With so many essential needs, many people were doubtful that such a large deficit could be addressed without raising taxes. However, despite the tough fiscal conditions we faced, we passed a \$23 billion operating budget that closed the deficit without raising taxes while providing for vital services, job growth and for those most in need.

In addition, I worked on bills that would provide senior citizen property tax relief, protect women from “upskirt photographers,” and economic development legislation to bring more jobs to our area while preserving current jobs.

It is an honor to serve and represent you in the House of Representatives. Please feel free to contact me about any issues involving state government that are important to you and your family.

Sincerely,

Joyce
Rep. Joyce McDonald

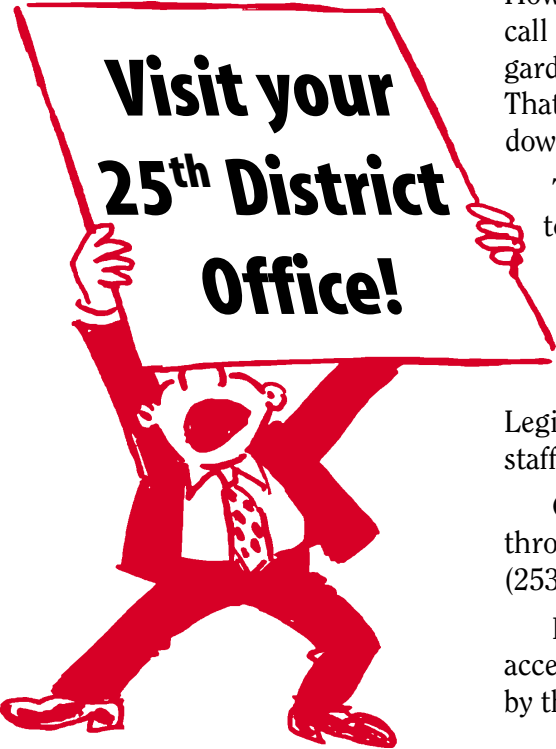


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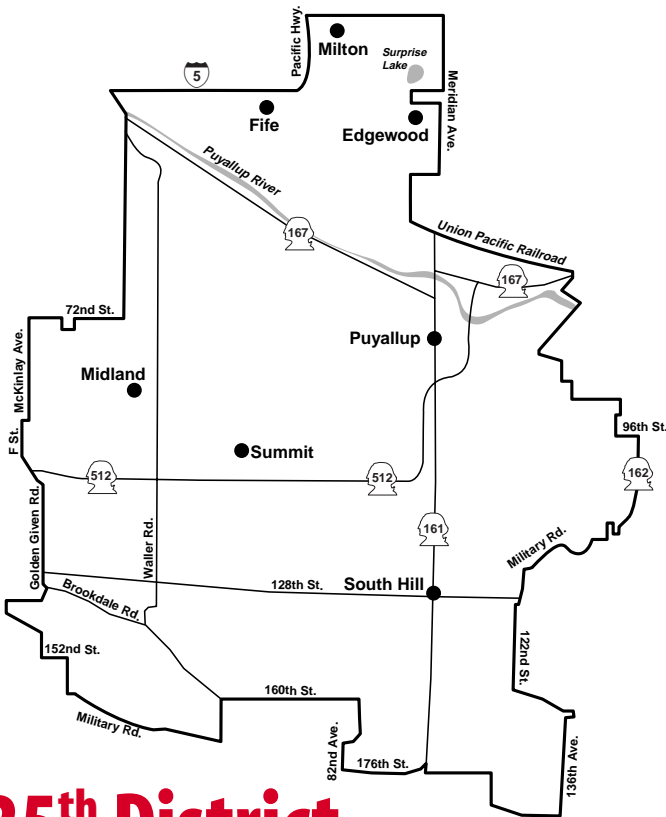
Olympia may not be that far away from the district. However, it can be inconvenient to make that drive or to call long distance when you have a question or issue regarding legislative matters and/or state government. That’s why I established a local office this summer in downtown Puyallup.

The 25th District Office is another way to keep in touch locally with the people I represent. It’s also much more convenient than referring citizens to Olympia.

The location is: 101 S. Meridian, Suite I, Puyallup, WA 98371. During interim (the time when the Legislature is not in session), my office will be open and staffed by my legislative assistant, Michele Smith.

Office hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday. We may also be reached by phone at: (253) 840-4606.

Representative government works best when it is accessible to the people it serves. Please feel free to drop by the office and let us know what is on your mind!



25th District

Rep. Joyce McDonald • 2003 Legislative Report • 25th District

Here's how I voted on the major issues of the 2003 session:

Operating Budget I voted YES ☒

Although some wanted to increase taxes to close a \$2.7 billion budget deficit, I felt that it was our responsibility to develop a budget that makes government live within its means, without shifting the burden to families and businesses.

The budget we passed focused our limited resources on the most pressing priorities – maintaining vital services, providing for our children's education, and protecting our state's most vulnerable.

We were able to maintain health coverage for low-income children and avoid deep reductions in services for the developmentally disabled and troubled youth. We also maintained health care coverage for 100,000 low-income citizens on the Basic Health Plan.

We increased pay for teachers in their first seven years, boosted per-student funding for class-size reduction to \$254, up from \$212, and gave home health-care workers a 75-cent-per-hour pay raise.

We would have liked to have done more for teachers, health-care workers and state employees. Unfortunately, the budget is a reflection of our tight economic times.

However, on the positive side, by balancing this budget without new taxes, we position Washington for a quicker economic recovery and job creation.

Capital Budget I voted YES ☒

Nearly \$25 million is provided in the capital construction budget for various projects in the 25th District. Pierce College Puyallup will receive \$23.3 million for expansion of classrooms. Money was provided for a community park in South Hill, a soccer field in Fife, an interurban trail in Milton and improvements to Sprinker Skate Park. These improvements will build on the quality of life we enjoy in our local area.

Transportation

• Improvements I voted YES ☒

Local traffic congestion seems to get worse by every passing day. I voted for a 10-year transportation plan that will provide more than \$227 million in road improvements for the 25th District. We will see additional capacity, paving, widening and safety projects on I-5, SR 161, SR 167 and SR 512.

• Tax increases I voted NO ☒

I am a stickler for fiscal accountability with taxpayers' money. That's YOUR money! I supported a plan that would have tied transportation efficiencies to a five-cent gas tax increase. However, when legislation came out that provided the tax increases, but not the efficiencies, I could not support it. The final bill contained increased truck weight fees, an increase in the sales taxes of cars, and a nickel-per-gallon hike in the gas tax – but no transportation reforms that would ensure your money is spent wisely. I voted no.

Incentives to Land the Boeing 7E7 I voted YES ☒

With nearly 160,000 people losing their jobs in the past three years, my primary goal this session was to work to create jobs.

Boeing is an important factor in the local economy. Although the 1,200 jobs created by siting of its 7E7 assembly plant may not sound like much, the multiplying effect will create thousands of other new jobs – many within the 25th District.

That's why I voted to approve a tax incentive package for Boeing that will be implemented **only** if it decides to build the 7E7 in Washington. It gives Boeing another reason to keep jobs in Washington.

Voyeurism Penalties and Preserving the Integrity of the State's Felony

Murder Law I voted YES ☒

The Legislature passed two bills responding to state Supreme Court rulings. One outlaws filming up someone's skirt without consent. This builds upon my original anti-voyeurism bill which became law in 1998.

The other law allows prosecutors to file second-degree murder charges in assault cases that result in death.



Rep. McDonald was pleased to welcome 6th graders from Hunt Elementary in Puyallup to the Capitol this year.

Assistance for Prescription Drug Costs I voted YES ☒

The Legislature adopted a prescription drug assistance measure that will provide meaningful relief to many of our low-income seniors and disabled citizens.

Among other things, the plan directs the state's Health Care Authority to negotiate price discounts for Washington residents 50 and older or disabled with income up to 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level and lacking prescription drug coverage. Discounts may not be at the expense of retail pharmacies.

The bill will help to ensure that low-income citizens can get the prescription drugs they need at prices they can afford.

Stricter Medicaid Assistance Rules I voted NO ☒

The Legislature reduced the amount of assets a married couple may keep in order for one partner to qualify for Medicaid long-term care. Seniors should be able to keep more of their resources.

Performance audits I voted YES ☒

Washington has not had a good track record with taxpayers' money. Last year, the state auditor released a report citing numerous examples of state agencies misspending and poorly monitoring millions in tax dollars. Performance audits could begin putting this state back on track by demanding accountability from state agencies spending your money. Although performance audit legislation passed the House, where I voted yes, it died in the Senate.

Establishing an Economic Development Commission I voted YES ☒

It's often said we don't plan to fail. Instead, we fail to plan. This legislation will keep us from falling into that rut with our economy. The Washington Economic Development Commission will develop new strategies toward attracting business, bringing new jobs to our state, and working to improve our economic climate. Although the commission was first established by the governor, this legislation makes it a permanent entity.

Allowing local governments to increase taxes I voted NO ☒

The Legislature approved a measure that would allow counties to increase their local sales taxes by 0.3 percent. Although the increase is subject to voter approval, a tax increase is not the way to get our local economy back on track.